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Extensions of country programmes in the Asia and the Pacific region

Note by the Executive Director

Summary

The present note contains information on the following country programme extensions: (a) one-year extensions of the country programmes for Bangladesh, Myanmar and Viet Nam; (b) a second one-year extension of the country programme for Iran (Islamic Republic of); and (c) two-year extensions of the country programmes for Nepal and Pakistan.

In accordance with established procedures, the Executive Director approves the first one-year extension of a country programme, while requests for extensions for a second year or two-year extensions are submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

The Executive Board may wish to: (a) take note of the one-year country programme extensions for Bangladesh, Myanmar and Viet Nam, as indicated in table 1; and (b) approve the second one-year extension of the country programme for Iran (Islamic Republic of) and the two-year country programme extensions for Nepal and Pakistan, as indicated in table 2.

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Table 1. One-year country programme extensions approved by the Executive Director

Country	Original programme period	Year proposed for extension	Explanation		
			United Nations harmonization	In-country political development	Implementation and/or other issues
Bangladesh	2006-2010	2011	Since 2008, the Government of Bangladesh and its development partners have discussed the formulation of a joint cooperation strategy in order to better align development assistance to the poverty reduction strategy and national development plans. Subsequently, in order to better align the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) with the cycle of the poverty reduction strategy and the joint cooperation strategy, the Government requested the extension of the UNDAF as well as the UNFPA country programme by one year.	The development of a joint cooperation strategy is a government-led process, supported by the development partners. The joint cooperation strategy seeks to better align development assistance to national development plans, in particular the poverty reduction strategy, 2009-2011, and the sixth five-year development plan, 2010-2015. The joint cooperation strategy also supports the 2021 perspective plan of Bangladesh. It sets out partnership principles for adherence by all parties. These principles are designed to maximize the effectiveness and coherence of official development assistance, in line with the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2008 Accra Agenda of Action. The joint cooperation strategy is expected to result in harmonized and streamlined programmes that support the national development plans of Bangladesh by providing a common platform of development cooperation between the Government and its development partners. United Nations organizations, through the United Nations resident coordinator system, are actively engaged in formulating the joint cooperation strategy and are committed to its principles and objectives.	The current country programme provides an adequate framework for all UNFPA-supported projects being implemented in Bangladesh.

Table 1. One-year country programme extensions approved by the Executive Director (cont'd)

Country	Original programme period	Years proposed for extension	Explanation		
			United Nations Harmonization	In-country political development	Implementation and/or other issues
Myanmar	2007-2010	2011	The United Nations country team in Myanmar has embarked on a joint strategic planning process and has agreed to harmonize its programmes under a common United Nations Framework of Cooperation, 2012-2015. As a result, United Nations organizations are required to extend their current programme cycles to 2011, in order to conduct an analysis of the humanitarian and development situations of the country and to undertake joint programming.	Parliamentary and presidential elections are scheduled for 2010. The one-year programme extension would allow for a smooth transition and the formulation of the third country programme with the newly elected government.	The current UNFPA programme of assistance will continue through the end of 2011 since it provides an adequate framework for UNFPA-supported activities being implemented in Myanmar. The national reproductive health strategic plan, 2009-2013, also provides a framework for programme implementation. Emergency preparedness and humanitarian response have become integral parts of the programme since the occurrence of Cyclone Nargis and other natural and manmade disasters. UNFPA has played a leading role in joint efforts by the United Nations in the areas of data and gender issues by chairing the United Nations country team thematic group on monitoring and evaluation, as well as the thematic group on gender.

Table 1. One-year country programme extensions approved by the Executive Director (cont'd)

Country	Original programme period	Years proposed for extension	Explanation		
			United Nations harmonization	In-country political development	Implementation and/or other issues
Viet Nam	2006-2010	2011	The United Nations country team and the Government of Viet Nam agreed to an extension of the 'one plan' by one year, through 2011. The 'one plan' includes the programmes of 14 participating United Nations organizations, including UNFPA, and is implemented as part of the 'one United Nations' initiative. The one-year extension of the country programme will enable the government socio-economic development plan, 2011-2015, to guide the development of the 'one plan', 2012-2016. The analysis of the comparative advantage of the United Nations and of the transition to a middle-income country will also be reflected in the next 'one plan'	The national socio-economic development strategy, 2010-2020, and the fifth socio-economic development plan, 2011-2015, are under development. The government-led assessment in late 2009 of the programme coordination group provides input for strengthening the mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the next 'one plan'. The Government is also developing other national and sectoral strategies, such as the population and reproductive health strategy 2011-2012, the national health strategy 2011-2020, the HIV strategy and the gender strategy. The results of the national census are being analysed; the results will provide information for the next 'one plan'.	During the extension period, the United Nations country team will: (a) continue to shift its strategy to provide high-quality, upstream policy advice and technical expertise; (b) adopt a more evidence-based and systematic approach to capacity-building at provincial, district and commune levels, with increased investment in high-quality studies and research for use in developing policies and programmes; and (c) continue to emphasize the needs of vulnerable groups, especially women, youth, children and rural and ethnic minorities. UNFPA will enhance its support to ongoing programmatic interventions in order to achieve outputs and outcomes in the 'one plan' through three programme areas: (a) reproductive health and rights; (b) population and development; and (c) gender equality.

Table 2. Second one-year or two-year country programme extensions for which the approval of the Executive Board is sought

Country	Original programme period	Years proposed for extension	Explanation		
			United Nations harmonization	In-country political development	Implementation and or other issues
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2005–2009; 2010 (first one-year extension)	2011	The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the country programmes of United Nations organizations are being extended by one year, through 2011. This will enable them to be aligned with the national development plan approval process.	The Government submitted the fifth national development plan, 2010–2014, to Parliament in early 2010 for discussion and ratification. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the government coordinating agency, requested the United Nations country team to wait until the national development plan was ratified before beginning the development of the UNDAF. This would enable the UNDAF to reflect the priorities identified in the new national development plan.	The current UNFPA country programme provides an adequate framework for all UNFPA-supported activities being implemented in the Islamic Republic of Iran. UNFPA will continue its work in its core programme areas of reproductive health and rights, population and development, and gender equality through the end of 2011.

Table 2. Second one-year or two-year country programme extensions for which the approval of the Executive Board is sought (cont'd)

Country	Original programme period	Years proposed for extension	Explanation		
			United Nations harmonization	In-country political development	Implementation and/or other issues
Nepal	2008–2010	2011–2012	The Government has agreed to the extension of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the country programmes of the Executive Committee agencies of the United Nations Development Group, in order to align United Nations support with the government planning process.	The Government, national actors and international partners continue to work to bring the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement to a conclusion, following a decade of armed conflict. After the change in Government in mid-2009, the Government announced a new schedule for the development of a national development plan.	The current country programme remains valid as an overall framework for the continuation of UNFPA activities. The new national development plan and other sectoral plans, such as the national health strategic plan II, both of which will become effective in July 2010, will guide the UNFPA programme. UNFPA will continue its support for the national population and housing census in June 2011, and will support national needs resulting from natural disasters and post-conflict recovery and rehabilitation. At the request of the Government, UNFPA will also extend its assistance to an additional six districts in 2010 and a further six in 2011. This will help to strengthen local government and community capacity, consolidate peace and sustain development, especially for the most marginalized persons.

Table 2 Second one-year or two-year country programme extensions for which the approval of the Executive Board is sought (cont'd)

Country	Original programme period	Years proposed for extension	Explanation		
			United Nations harmonization	In-country political development	Implementation and/or other issues
Pakistan	2004–2008; 2009–2010 (extension)	2011–2012 (second two-year extension)	The Government and the United Nations country team signed the "one United Nations" programme for Pakistan in April 2009, after extensive negotiations based on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), 2004–2010. The Government requested the United Nations system to extend the UNDAF through 2012 to allow time for the initial implementation of the agreed "one United Nations" programme. United Nations organizations agreed to extend the UNDAF through 2011, which necessitated an extension of the UNFPA country programme.	The present administration took office in 2008, and began extensive military operations in the northwest of the country in 2009. In this context, the Government felt it inopportune to elaborate a new "one United Nations" programme and new agreements with individual United Nations organizations before 2011.	The seventh UNFPA country programme is based on the current UNDAF and provides an adequate framework for the two-year extension period. The unstable security situation resulted in the deaths of United Nations staff in 2009 and the decision by the United Nations Secretary-General to reduce international staff presence in the country. Under the circumstances, humanitarian assistance will be one of the key areas of intervention for UNFPA, in order to respond to the needs of affected vulnerable groups. In 2010, UNFPA will carry out a population assessment exercise to contribute to the development of the new UNDAF in 2011.